

## Ghana Partnership Committee Report

November 19, 2017, by Fran Osseo-Asare

Here is an update on the latest developments in our relationship with GNTCS.

1. GNTCS has recently changed its name from Good News Theological College and Seminary to Good News Theological Seminary (GNTS).
2. Humphrey is still in the U.S. until the end of 2017. He extended his visa for "practical training," which means that it is good through May. He will be doing the training in Ghana, but Eddie will be able to complete 12<sup>th</sup> grade here in the U.S. Eddie has a host family in Philadelphia area to stay with.
3. There are no Mennonite students who have applied to the seminary. According to Thomas "The division of the Mennonites in Ghana is making it difficult for their leaders to think about theological education. We are, however, still dialoguing with them." This poses a question regarding the money we have allocated to a scholarship for a Mennonite student. Perhaps we can add the money to their scholarship fund to be used as needed? Thomas also writes of this fund "**The Scholarship Fund** has fetched nearly \$6000.00. Half of the Fund has already been given to current students. There is also the need to enroll applicants from African countries, provided their churches can pay the airfares of their applicants."
4. Regarding current GNCS faculty in the U.S., "Telvis Kankam was enrolled, full-time, at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, MN to do a Master's degree in Systematic Theology but he is now doing the course online due to some difficulties he encountered in getting a traveling visa to the US." Another faculty member, Irene Amon, has independently been awarded a scholarship to do a doctorate in (I think) Congregation Leadership, at Fuller Seminary in Pasadena California. She began in August this year and will be here for several years. Humphrey has promised to forward me her contact information. He spoke very highly of her, and mentioned she was a former student at GNTCS.

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### 5. **Other news from Thomas:**

- a. The recruitment exercise did not meet our expectation so we have devise some other means other than radio and TV advertisements. The seminary hired someone to do a survey of churches in communities and towns near the seminary. In all 167 churches have been located. We plan to group them, run seminars and workshops, with the aim of introducing the seminary and appeal for students. The drought of students in theological institutions in Ghana is becoming a major concern. The experience of Good News is not a peculiar one. Right now there are 31 students in the regular program.

b. For the past year, we have been periodically teaching some pastors and leaders of some churches in the Volta Region. They number over 200. We have decided to turn the periodic teaching into a **Certificate Theological Education by Extension (TEE) program. The program is scheduled to begin in January 2018. That will also be expected to be a means of recruiting students to the regular programs.**

c. A Proposal is on my desk **to start a TEE College for African Independent Churches in West Africa.** According to the Proposal there are similar TEE Colleges in Eastern and Southern Africa. We believe that we would use the TEE programs as a nurturing ground for students who would be eligible for the Diploma and Bachelor of Theology programs.

d. The seminary has been **searching for committed owners.** Letters have been written to leaders of some AICs to consider becoming owners of the seminary. The new plan is that committed owners and friends of the seminary will pay 60% of the annual budget of the seminary beginning from the 2018 fiscal year. Three churches have already expressed their desire to be owners of the seminary. We are yet to get two more churches, as a minimum number, to start shifting from the old order which there were many "owners" who paid lip service to the financial running of the seminary. It is most likely that we will have five committed owners of the seminary by the end of this month.

e. **A new Governing Council** (formerly known as the Board) is scheduled to be reconstituted in January 2018. This means most of the old Board members will be retired. We thank God for the old Board members. They have served the seminary for over three decades. Please pray with us for a smooth reconstitution of the Council. We thank God for the dedicated services of the old Board members who would soon exit the administration of the seminary.

6. Prayer requests from the seminary:

Please pray for the following scheduled needs:

**(a) A Fund raising dinner in January, 2018.** A portion of the Weaver's Hall needs to be roofed. A concrete platform of some part of the Hall has been soaking rain water for over 15 years. We are planning to raise funds to roof it.

**(b). An Alumni Home coming** in January 2018.

**(c)** Commencement of **TEE Program in the Volta Region**, starting in January 2018.

**(d)** The purchase of an Accounting software. \$2000 is needed.

(e) The need for a Librarian - (full-time or short-term).

**Regular prayer topics:**

(a) Educational scholarships for needy students, particularly, prospective students from other African countries.

(b) Renewal of the Seminary's accreditation status is pending.

(c) Textbooks for graduating students to use while on the field.

(d) Working tools for staff & Faculty - laptops and resource books.

**(e) Thank God for the commitment of the Faculty and Staff.**

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7. Partnership Covenant: UMC's 3-year partnership covenant ends at the end of this year, 2017. At the budget meeting this year the congregation voted to renew the funding of the scholarship, and has delayed consideration of partnership renewal to 2018. The Ghana Partnership Committee has been in contact with Wes Bergen of the Morgantown Church of the Brethren (& Sistren). They have voted \$2,000 to the seminary this year, and want to continue the conversation and exploration with us about what a relationship with us and Good News Theological Seminary would mean. When John Murray was here from the Mennonite Mission Network, he mentioned that MMN continues in relationship with GNTS.